

Legislation cosponsored by Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) to eliminate wasteful federal spending passed the U.S. House today by a bipartisan vote of 254 to 173. The bill grants the president a form of line-item veto authority on spending bills that passes constitutional muster. Previous attempts to enact executive line-item veto authority have been struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional.

The Expedited Legislative Line-Item Veto and Rescissions Act of 2011 (H.R. 3521) grants the president the authority to return to Congress objectionable spending provisions contained in large appropriations bills. The legislation requires expedited up-or-down votes on each item flagged by the president.

"This is a practical tool that every president should have to check unnecessary federal spending," Welch said. "As congressional gridlock prevents a comprehensive approach to reducing the federal debt, this bipartisan bill is a no-brainer. It won't by itself balance the budget, but it should be part of the toolkit to get spending under control."

H.R. 3521 will now go to the U.S. Senate for consideration. The White House has indicated the President would sign the bill should it reach his desk.